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ABSTRACT

The capacity for independence, the capacity for collaboration, and student personalities will be the main variables in a proposed study. To specify in greater detail which approach to the problem would be most fruitful, a review of the literature was made and the parties involved were interviewed. The study then focused on several questions for investigation. It is expected that the work will be composed of two rather extensive survey investigations and a few intensive studies. The intensive studies will be done on the lower and middle forms, the senior forms and secondary schools, and the post secondary schools, especially in the teacher training sector. (JY)

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Title of Project:	Pupil Democracy - Co-Planning at different Educational Levels
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Principal Aims

To carry out a partial survey of actual current forms of pupil collaboration at different educational levels and the interconnected characteristic interaction patterns as well in the pupil groups as in the inter-play between pupils and other groups affected;

to study attitudes and opinions connected with existing procedures and interaction patterns found among both the pupils and the teachers affected;

to investigate typical features of the innovation process (including aspects from the social-psychological and cognitive points of view), when new processes for co-planning are introduced or gradually developed;

to draw up, on the basis of surveys and innovation experiments, recommendations for future development and possibly contribute to an interaction analytical theory for co-operation, independence and discipline.

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Background and Assignments

Problems associated with the capacity for independence and the capacity for collaboration and personality psychological and educational psychological hypotheses based on these variables have previously engaged the attention of the institute and the director of the project (see, e.g., Bjerstedt, 1956, 1965 a, b, 1966; Bjerstedt, Bierschenk & Löfgren, 1968). In 1967 the institute began work on a research project concerned with social development and upbringing ("Project S"), in which the capacity for collaboration and resistance to propaganda are subjected to test analysis and pedagogical examination. The present project (which to some extent may be regarded as a "daughter project" of Project S) was announced to the Board of Education during the spring of 1968 and represents a continuation of this concentration of interest, special emphasis being given to certain concrete school problems.

General Motivation

It has been frequently observed that one of the causes of disciplinary difficulties at school can be shortcomings in the working forms of the school, not least the circumstance, for example, that our teen-agers are not given a sufficient opportunity of feeling themselves involved in a functional participation in the activity of the school, that they participate only in exceptional cases in the making of decisions and planning. Thus, based on specific conditions within the school world, emphasis has been given to the importance of the school permitting the pupils to take part in a certain degree of co-planning.

More important than the adjustment of pupils to the school world is in the long run the adjustment of the individual to the world outside the school, and this line of thought frequently recurs in various contexts. One of the more important aims of the school should be, as far as possible, to train pupils to function in a democratic society - showing a willingness to co-operate, a sense of responsibility and a feeling of independence. Many are of the opinion that the school has neglected, to far too great an extent, its responsibility in

these respects, and that we should not expect much more in the way of willingness to co-operate, a sense of responsibility and independence than we have given the pupils a possibility of acquiring by means of direct training.

The problems are not new but they can be said to have come increasingly to the fore as a result of certain external circumstances. The Swedish teachers' strike, which suddenly plunged the pupils into a situation in which great demands were made of the capacity to accept responsibility and to plan, showed that sometimes pupils were capable of making surprisingly mature contributions and that - naturally - many felt utterly confused and found it difficult to show initiative. One should perhaps interpret the situation to mean that we have a potential reserve of power which we have exploited ineffectively. One other factor may be mentioned. Student disorders in various parts of the world have naturally a variety of complex causes. Common to many incidents, however, seems to be the familiar feeling of standing outside the established machinery of power, the level at which decisions are made, and being denied the chance of taking part in effective co-planning.

There is a certain unaminity on the view that the school as well as the university must seek new forms of work which will permit the individual pupil or student great scope for co-planning (whether this is expressed as a demand for justice that has not been satisfied or as a neglected educational opportunity). On the other hand there is a great deal of uncertainty as to the best forms to be adapted for this activity. We know too little about what is actually going on, about the way in which various experiments are experienced by those taking part (by teachers as well as pupils) and about the best way of proceeding further. We are thus confronted from the start with a need for surveys, research and analysis.

One more special fact, worthy of note in this context, is that, with effect from the school year 1968-69, the Colleges of Education have for the first time granted statutory student representation in two central bodies (the College Principals Committee and the Teachers' Council), marking a fairly radical departure from the rather patriarchal system inherited from the Teachers'

Training Colleges. How this innovation is functioning and being experienced from various points of view has therefore become a natural subject for study in connection with the general scope of our problem.

Presentation of the Problem

The work was commenced by taking stock of the problem on the basis of literary studies and informal interviews with the parties involved - the aim being to specify in greater detail the component problems that would most repay research. It is still too soon to produce an entirely definitive list of problems, since the later phases of the project will in part be governed by the results of the earlier (for this reason even the formulation of the major aims of the project must be regarded in certain respects as tentative).

However, even at an early stage, questions of the following type appear to be natural:

1) What formal scope exists for different forms of collaboration on the decision-making and planning side, as far as students at various educational levels (in the comprehensive school, secondary and post-secondary colleges) are concerned? To what extent are there discrepancies between formal scope and actual utilization? What existing principal forms of student democracy can be distinguished? How prevalent are they?

2) How, in greater detail, do the forms of collaboration referred to under 1) above function? What are the characteristic interaction patterns? (In this category there is scope for a large number of dependent questions of the type "How does the interplay work between the individual pupils and the representatives of the pupils on the pupils' council and committees? How are the pupils' representatives elected, and who are elected? To what extent is there a continuous mutual exchange of information between pupils and representatives during periods between elections? To what extent does the teacher, for example, take the initiative to establish working forms permitting pupils to exercise influence in the choice of subject matter, study materials and methods? How does the

interplay function between teachers and pupils outside the instructional group, in formally regulated committee contacts and informal contacts respectively? To what degree is the influence of the pupils formalized as a result of local regulations? In what decisions are the pupils permitted to make their contribution?

3) How are the existing regulations governing the actual situation to-day regarded - cognitively as well as emotionally - by the parties involved: a) pupils, b) teachers, c) other groups? To what extent are people aware (have a correct cognitive picture) of the norms in force and the actual circumstances? To what extent are people satisfied or dissatisfied with the existing rules as well as the actual situation? (To what extent is the present model for pupil representation regarded as too narrow or too broad? What are the advantages and disadvantages predicted for an extended school democracy? What concrete desires and proposals for improvement are to be put forward? Etc.)

4) Are there any evident links, of importance for an understanding of the social-psychological dynamics, between real interaction patterns, opinions and attitudes on the one hand, and other variables (the age, sex and intelligence of the pupils; the socio-preferential structure; the teachers' education, etc) on the other?

5) What typical difficulties arise in the course of a process of innovation, when new procedures for co-planning are introduced? What differences must be taken into account when the innovation process starts under different circumstances? (E.g., when it starts as a result of a unilateral initiative taken by the authorities, the principal, the teaching staff or the student body, compared with the situation when the innovation is introduced following a decision by all concerned; when it starts with a ready made pattern for organization and procedures for reaching decisions compared with the situation when it is allowed to grow up gradually in the course of a trial and error process gradual feed-back/ etc.)

6) Is it possible partly to anticipate and/or subsequently to tie up the empirical experiences with the aid of a theory of co-operation, independence, the sharing of power and discipline?

- What recommendations can be derived directly or indirectly from items 1-5 above for future development? Such recommendations ought, as far as possible, to cover several fields: current trends associated with school reform imply in various ways a cutting down of the teacher's part as the maker of decisions (the use of previously prepared teaching material, pupil collaboration, teacher teams, etc.). What can be done so that teachers may regard this development as something positive rather than as something negative ("the shedding of power")? What can be done to reinforce tendencies favouring experiences of mutual responsibility in different groups and to counteract tendencies leading towards a struggle for power? What new forms of collaboration for pupils ought to be given a formal scope? In what way can the discrepancies between formal scope and actual exploitation be reduced? What concrete proposals for improvement are supported by the greatest degree of unaminity?

Execution

General Views

In general, it is expected that the work will be partly composed of a couple of rather extensive survey investigations, partly of certain intensive studies. The aim of the extensive surveys is mainly to find answers to the questions posed in items 1-4 above. The planned parallel intensive studies have two principal objects: in part they will assume the form of explorative-casuistic studies of individual attempts to establish increased pupil democracy (preferably during innovation phases), partly as experimental studies intended to test more specific hypotheses on the interplay between certain main variables in the field of the problem and thus help to answer the questions posed in items 4-6 above.

The aims of the more extensive investigations are not in the first place to give a representative picture of some "Swedish average situation" but are rather to be expressed in such a way that they make it possible to study relations between interesting variables in this context. From the point of view of method, socio-matrices of the basic contact channels in the individual school should,

among other things, prove of interest. On the one hand it could thereby be of significance to distinguish between different categories of people, e.g. pupils with representative functions (elected as representatives of pupils on the pupils' council or committees), pupils without representative functions, teachers with special responsible functions, teachers without special responsible functions, etc.; on the other hand, it could also be of interest to keep separate in the cells of the relation matrices at least four different data aspects: 1) prescribed relations ("norm data", N), 2) actual relations (F), relations experienced cognitively (K) and 4) preferences or desired relations (P).

Some of the questions above are in fact concerned with discrepancies between these data aspects. Among other things it would be interesting to study:

$Diff_{N-F}$ = the discrepancy between prescribed norms and actual conditions

$Diff_{F-K}$ = the discrepancy between actual conditions and the cognitive experience of these conditions

$Diff_{F-P}$ = the discrepancy between actual conditions and desired conditions

The task of constructing this theory might, among other things, consist of a more systematic attempt to describe the expected relations between the values of such discrepancies and symbols of efficiency and inefficiency in the social functions or symbols of positive and negative attitudes towards prevailing circumstances, whereby similarities and dissimiliarities between different groups of persons (e.g., those with and those without representative functions) ought also to be taken into consideration. Space does not permit further discussion of these questions from the point of view of matter or method; as an indication of some probable relevant angles for tackling the problem what has already been said must suffice.

Three Subordinate Fields

From the point of view of work, the project is at present divided into three parts. One of these is concerned with school democracy in the lower and middle forms of the comprehensive school (Part

I); another deals with corresponding questions in the senior forms of the comprehensive school as well as in secondary schools and vocational schools (Part II); while the third studies problems of pupil democracy in connection with post-secondary school institutes of education, special emphasis being given to the teacher training sector (Part III). Mrs Wetterström is responsible for Part I, Mrs Valind for Part II and Mr Räikkönen for Part III. What has been done so far and the next stages which have planned for the three parts of the project are briefly described in the following. For a more detailed presentation, see Bjerstedt 1969.

Against the background of the existing preliminary experiences and results, it is reckoned that the investigations should be prolonged throughout at least two more school years.

Investigations in the Lower and Middle Forms

As is well known, there exist at present no formal or universally applicable rules for influence by pupils in the lower and middle forms. However, even at these levels there does informally exist different kinds of influence, varying, among other things, with the interest shown in this by teachers and school principals. As a contribution to the survey of the situation to-day, a questionnaire has been drawn up and distributed to certain principals, teachers, teacher candidates and pupils in Malmö. The questionnaire contained questions intended to measure a) personal evaluations, b) the experienced situation as regards the making of decisions in the school and in the classroom c) the desired ("ideal) situation as regards the making of decisions.

Based, among other things, on this background material certain trials are planned to take place subsequently with gradually increased influence by pupils. It is possible that an invitation will be extended to follow, stage by stage, an experimental innovation initiated by SECO, the Swedish Union of Secondary-School Students.

Investigations in the Senior Forms and the Secondary School

In the case of Part II, a survey investigation of the interplay between on the one hand pupils, and on the other hand pupils' representatives on the pupils' council, conferences on special

subjects and boards of co-ordination has been carried out. Among other things, the investigation is focussed on the following questions: 1) How does the interplay function between pupils and pupils' representatives on various committees and conferences? 2) What attitudes do the pupils adopt towards their representatives? 3) What adjustments with regard to pupil representation do the pupils regard as desirable?

Parallel to these survey studies, a special study is being made of Källäng School in Malmö, where a series of experiments have been held since the autumn term of 1968, involving both increased pupil representation on already existing committees and also the setting up of new contact organs between teachers and pupils. In connection with the Källäng School study, a freshly constructed attitude chart intended to measure pupil attitudes towards democracy at school and in the community is being tried out.

Investigations at the Post-Secondary School Level

Part III is specially concentrated on the investigation of conditions in the teacher training sector, which naturally and in the long run ought to be of significance for the development in the school. The collection of data now carried out has included 1) interviews with key persons, 2) the analysis of proceedings and 3) survey investigations of questionnaire type. The collected, relatively extensive material obtained by questionnaire material from teachers and students at the Colleges of Education is being worked on at present and is intended to form the substance of a report during School Year 1969-70.

In close association with the project work proper some supplementary investigations have been undertaken for the Board of Education, including among other things a collection of reports from teacher training institutes to the Board of Education see Almhed and Räikkönen, 1969) and some additional work in connection with this material.

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